



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

October 29, 2015

Mr. Theodore A. Brown
Headquarters
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CECW-P (SA)
7701 Telegraph Road
Alexandria, Virginia 22315-3860

Subject: Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Feasibility Report Final Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report, Los Angeles County, California [CEQ# 20150265]

Dear Mr. Brown:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Feasibility Report. Our review and comments are pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

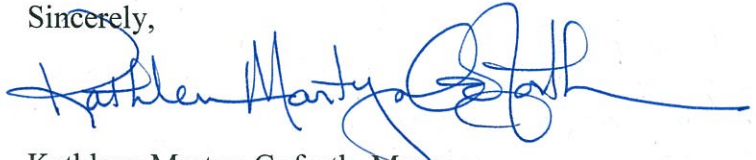
EPA reviewed the Draft EIS and provided comments to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in a letter dated November 25, 2013. In our comments, we articulated EPA's strong support for restoration of the LA River, particularly in light of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership's Los Angeles River Watershed pilot project through which EPA has worked closely with the Corps and over 40 organizations involved in LA River issues. We rated the proposed project as "Lack of Objections" and encouraged the Corps to select Alternative 20 because it would provide the most benefits for water quality, via improved stormwater management; provide the most benefits for water conservation, due to greater replenishment of local groundwater supplies; maximize the ecosystem benefits of the action; and best achieve national and local Urban Waters Partnership goals. We recommended that the Final EIS include additional analysis to consider the benefits to water quality, groundwater replenishment, and habitat connectivity in the alternative selection process.

The Final EIS identifies Alternative 20 as the Locally Preferred Plan and Recommended Plan. The Executive Summary highlights the overwhelming support for Alternative 20 in the comment letters the Corps received from the public and other government agencies. We recognize the Corps' efforts to quantify habitat connectivity in the Final EIS. We appreciate that the Corps incorporated our suggested revisions to the environmental justice analysis, committed to consider a Sustainable Materials Management approach into recreation structures during the design phase of the project, and highlighted its intent to incorporate climate change resiliency into the design of all restoration features.

EPA maintains its strong support for restoration of the LA River and for Alternative 20. We believe that Alternative 20 provides significant advantages over the other alternatives evaluated, particularly in terms of benefits to water quality and groundwater replenishment.

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on this Final EIS. When the Record of Decision becomes available, please send a copy to the address above (Mail Code: ENF 4-2). Should you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3521, or contact Jean Prijatel, the lead reviewer for the project. Jean can be reached at (415) 947-4167 or prijatel.jean@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kathleen Martyn Goforth", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kathleen Martyn Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Section